Newsletter

Week 52, 2023

Park Institute of America

Fifty years ago this week, the **Endangered Species Act** became law.

Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed.

– President Richard Nixon, December 28th 1973

Read about the law's achievements and growing challenges here.

FEATURED PARK

Photos and facts of your favorite parks, one issue at a time

Valley of Fire State Park

Nevada

FACT 1: Valley of Fire is named for its distinctive red rock outcrops. These are part of the Aztec Sandstone, a geological formation with origins in the Jurassic period, more than **130 million years ago**. As prehistoric seas retreated and the region dried, sand was deposited by the wind, eventually creating sandstone formations.

FACT 2: The park contains many petroglyphs, or rock carvings, some of which are around 2,500 years old. The oldest of these are believed to have been created by the Basketmaker Culture, while others are the work of the Ancestral Pueblo, who inhabited the area until around 1150 AD.

Nominate *your* favorite local, state, or national park here so our subscribers can learn about it.

PARK PERKS

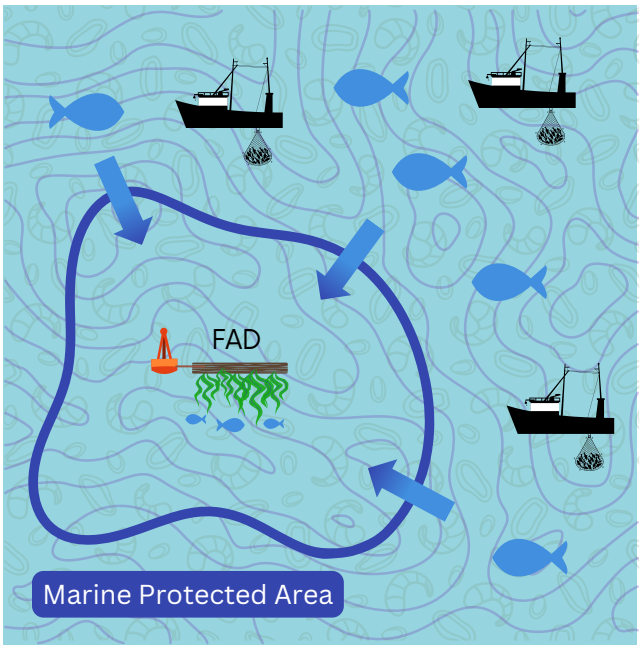
Visualizing key research to show why parks matter

What if tools designed to aid resource exploitation could help mitigate its effects? That question underpins this week's article, published last month in the journal *Conservation Letters*. The article focuses on fish aggregation devices (FADs), floating objects designed to attract and concentrate migrating populations of certain commercially-valuable marine fish species.

While the properties of FADs have thus far been mainly used to exploit fish populations, the authors assessed the devices' potential for protection. Using both spatial and nonspatial statistical models, they estimated the effect placing semi-stationary FADs in marine protected areas (MPAs) would have on the residence time of key fish species. The results of this analysis suggest that FAD usage significantly increases the time migratory fish spend within MPA borders, decreasing commercial exploitation of fish populations. The article lends credibility to the idea of using FADs to address overfishing.

Enhancing Fish Refuges

Fish Aggregation Device (FAD) use in MPAs



The authors believe that the installation of FADs in existing MPAs may provide a cost-effective alternative to MPA expansion, noting that even if exploitation is not reduced after MPA installation, fish may benefit from aggregation in other ways, such as increased breeding success. This research suggests that technologies used almost exclusively by extractive industries may have significant potential as conservation tools. More broadly, it highlights the value of applying unorthodox approaches to major conservation issues.

PLAY GROUND

Why don't older rabbits play sports?

they're always out of bounds

THANK YOU FOR YOUR READERSHIP IN 2023

We published 32 newsletters this year and look forward to creating even more next year. We'd love to hear your feedback on what parks, perks, and stories you want to read more about.